

Our New Thing Is Coming Together!

George Fox University, Newberg, July 24-26

The Interim Committee has been hard at work on a plan for our time in Newberg. Here's the scoop.

When: Monday, July 24 from 2-5 pm, Tuesday, July 25 from 8-5, and Wednesday, July 26 from 8-5.

Where: The Lemmons Center (corner of N. Meridian and E. North St) on the George Fox campus will be Our New Thing's home for all of our time together. We will be in a separate building from the rest of the NWYM Annual Sessions, so those who attend can choose how much interaction to have with the other group.

What: Our gathering will begin with informal gathering time and community-building on Monday afternoon from 2-5 pm, giving us a chance to get acquainted and learn a little about each other.

Tuesday sessions will begin at 8 AM and will include worship, music, small group discussions, large group times to integrate the leadings from small groups, and lots of listening to Spirit throughout. We will conclude our planned sessions at 5 pm.

The day will begin with welcome and waiting worship followed by worship-sharing groups focused on listening for what God is calling us to create at this time. At 10:30 AM, a panel of folks from the LGBTQ+ spectrum will talk about their experiences and what would help them to feel welcome and safe within the new organization. At 1 PM, after the lunch break, there will be time to talk about what we have learned from the panel and from each other. From 2-4 PM, we will have further opportunities to talk in small groups about important questions and concerns related to forming a new organization, and at 4 PM we will gather back together to listen for where we are led as a group.

We will also meet from 8-5 on Wednesday, starting with worship. The remainder of our time on Wednesday will depend on where we are led on Tuesday. If the sense of the meeting is that there is unity around some basic decisions, we will consider whether we are ready to approve steps such as:

- agreeing to form an organization,
- deciding what form the organization will take,
- describing its purpose and identity in general terms,
- choosing a name,
- nominating and empowering committees to work on different facets of the New Thing
- deciding when to gather next to continue our work

If we are not yet ready to take those steps, we will move back into listening mode, perhaps in small groups if that feels helpful. We may revisit the organizational steps later in the day if that feels right. At the end of the day on Wednesday, we will close with worship and celebration of wherever Spirit has led us in our time together.

Who: Anyone who is interested. Decisions, if any, will be made by the gathered group, and all voices are valued in the discernment process. You do not need to have attended a Friends meeting for a long time, be a member, be an elder, be a "weighty Friend", or anything else. You do not have to belong to one of the churches that is definitely leaving NWYM. You may be without a church at present. Youth and young adult friends are especially encouraged to participate, as are members of the LGBTQ+ community and anyone else who has felt marginalized or harmed by NWYM. Your perspectives are important as we imagine and listen to Spirit about who we want to be as a new organization.

Why: This is an opportunity for us to get to know others who are on this path to a New Thing with us. By gathering as many people together in one place as possible, we can also potentially move forward with necessary steps to formalize an organization if we are ready. We may also discern that we are not ready for that step. Participating in the gathering means that you can be part of the discernment process. **This is our chance to help make the New Thing something we are excited to be part of.**

Is this part of the NWYM Annual Sessions? Yes and no. Our schedule and agenda is independent of NWYM, but we are sharing the campus facilities and there will be opportunities to interact if desired. The NWYM schedule can be found here: nwfriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2017-Annual-Sessions-Schedule.pdf. NWYM has planned afternoon workshops and evening worship services with the hope that people from both groups will choose to attend, and we are also welcome to attend meals and social times if we wish.

The 1-2 PM NWYM workshop times will overlap with our sessions. Participants can choose which to attend. Our New Thing will not have formal sessions in the evenings during the NWYM worship services, but there will be an opportunity for unprogrammed worship in “our” space during that time for those who would prefer not to attend the NWYM worship.

What does it cost? We are still part of NWYM at this point, which allows us to use space at George Fox during Yearly Meeting Sessions at no cost and with housing and meals provided at reasonable cost. Childcare is also available if you register ahead. NWYM asks that we register but we are told they are not going to be strict about this, so if you are only coming for part of the time, or if money is an obstacle, don't worry about it, just come. Registration for the whole event is only \$25 if you are not staying in the dorms or buying a meal package. You can register at: <https://www.regonline.com/registration/Checkin.aspx?EventId=2009431>

For any questions regarding registration, lodging, meals, childcare, etc., call NWYM at (503) 538-9419 x100

What if I can't come to the meetings? Your ideas are still valuable! Talk to other members of your meeting who plan to attend, or comment on the Our New Thing Facebook page or website, or on Quaker News.

What if I want to serve on a committee or work group going forward? Send your self-nomination to Helen May at helen.morasch.may@gmail.com. She is collecting names and will forward them to the Nominating Committee.